

PENNSYLVANIA LESBIAN/GAY SUPPORT NETWORK

P.O. Box 4031 ALLENTOWN, PA. 18105

THE PURPOSE OF THE NETWORK

The Pennsylvania Lesbian/Gay Support Network adopted the following statement of purpose:

WE believe that the freedom to pursue a personally defined lifestyle is one of the most basic rights of all individuals. Where the laws and actions of governments or of economic and social institutions interfere with this right, they must be changed.

WE believe in the Pride, Dignity and Self Worth of all members of the Lesbian/Gay community.

WE believe that the needs of our Sisters and Brothers are best served by the common and unified actions of our own community. Our obligation must be to act in the best interest of Lesbians and Gays in all parts of the Commonwealth.

THE GOALS OF THE NETWORK

— to take action to correct the inequities of the law of the Commonwealth and its various municipalities, nonviolently and without partisanship.

— to initiate and aide in the development of services and programs for those areas of the Commonwealth not already covered, without interfering with existing organizations.

— to disseminate information between various areas of the Commonwealth, and to encourage the development of better communications systems.

— to bring together individuals and organizations of like interests, in order that they may exchange information and experience, and so that their common actions may be more effective to the Commonwealth level.

— to lobby with Commonwealth agencies for the inclusion of full consideration of the needs and rights of our community in all of their programs and policies.

BACKGROUND OF THE NETWORK

1972 saw the organization of the first state-wide Lesbian/Gay group, Federated Gays of Pennsylvania. FGP did not survive its first six months. In April of 1978, at the annual state conference, a resolution was passed calling for the formation of a Commonwealth-wide organization which would work for the Human rights and needs of rural, suburban and urban communities of Lesbians and Gays. In June of 1979, the Pennsylvania Lesbian/Gay Support Network was established.

HOW THE NETWORK OPERATES

Membership is open to all Lesbians and Gays in Pennsylvania. The direction of and approval for all actions comes directly from the membership. An Executive Committee — Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Regional Coordinators — is selected annually, and has the responsibility for carrying out the initiatives of the membership. Regional coordinators represent each of five areas of the state — Western Pa., Upper Central Pa., Lower Central Pa., Northeastern Pa., Southeastern Pa. — and are responsible for maintaining communications between those areas and the rest of the state. Members are eligible to stand for election to the Executive Committee if they have belonged to the Network for at least six months.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The Network is engaged in or planning the following programs for the coming year:

1. Planning and sponsoring the annual Lesbian/Gay Conference — PRIDE '80.
2. Outreach to rural and isolated areas of the state by providing them with support services and encouraging the formation of local organizations.
3. The 1980 Lesbian/Gay Pride month celebration. Coordinating local activities building towards a mass celebration/rally in the state capitol for next Spring.
4. Active involvement in the Spring primary elections. Determining the position of candidates on key issues, and publishing that information. Voter registration. Preparing an information packet on how to approach candidates, what issues to raise and how to encourage positive support.

5. THE INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN/GAY YEAR. We have had the International Women's Year and the International Year of the Child. The time has come for us to demand recognition of the integrity of our community in the form of the International Lesbian/Gay Year. The Network is proposing that 1985 be so designated, and we are challenging other organizations and individuals to support the idea and become involved in the planning.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THE NETWORK

1. Join the Network. It is easy. All you have to do is attend the meetings which are held monthly. (At present we meet at the Friends Meetinghouse, 6th & Herr Sts., Harrisburg, at 1 PM on the third Saturday. In November we will meet on the 17th, and in December, on the 15th.)

2. Contact the Regional Coordinator in your area. Local Lesbian/Gay Hotlines and switchboards will have the name and phone number, and the coordinator can tell you what the Network is doing and how you could help even if you are unable to get to Harrisburg for the meetings.

3. Contribute money. As with any all-volunteer organizations, we survive on the largess of our friends. Communications are expensive; the costs of printing and postage go higher as the value of the dollar goes lower. There is no possibility of success for the Lesbian/Gay Rights Movement unless each of us makes sacrifices of time and money.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Call your Regional Coordinator, or write to the Network, c/o P.O. Box 4031, Allentown, Pa. 18105.